

# CADEJA HAYS



## PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Senior Events Specialist with 5+ years of experience managing large-scale corporate and entertainment events with budgets exceeding \$1M. Proven expertise in VIP hospitality, partnership management, and executing high-touch brand activations. Strong background in event logistics, vendor relations, and budget optimization to maximize ROI and guest engagement.

## WORK EXPERIENCE

### KENTUCKY DERBY FESTIVAL

*EVENT MANAGER Sep 2021 - Present* • Lead budget management exceeding \$1 million for diverse festivals, ensuring efficient resource allocation and strict cost control to maximize ROI.

- Direct the planning and execution of 30+ events, including corporate meetings and entertainment venues, maintaining high brand standards throughout.
- Serve as the primary liaison for partnership management, ensuring seamless coordination and fulfillment of contractual hospitality deliverables for sponsors.
- Manage on-site event logistics and production teams for live concerts, overseeing talent scouting and high pressure operational execution.
- Lead VIP hospitality programs including premium ticket distribution and guest list management for high profile festival stakeholders.

### D'ANGELO RUSSELL FOUNDATION

*DIRECTOR OF EVENTS (Part Time) Jan 2025 - Present* • Direct all aspects of foundation events from concept to completion, managing approximately 5 major annual activations to increase community engagement.

- Orchestrate event logistics, timelines, and vendor coordination while maintaining precise budget templates for financial tracking.
- Develop and execute tailored brand activations for sponsors, ensuring high-touch experiences that align with organizational goals.
- Lead on-site teams to ensure events run efficiently and reflect the foundation's values. • Coordinate complex travel and accommodations for internal stakeholders and guest talent to ensure seamless event arrival.

### EVERLASTING EVENTS

*Director of EVENTS Feb 2019 - Jan 2024* • Developed comprehensive event budgets and timelines for 20+ annual clients, consistently delivering projects 10% under budget.

- Oversaw vendor management for a network of 80+ providers, negotiating favorable contracts to reduce procurement costs.
- Managed travel accommodations and logistics for event staff and clients while overseeing digital marketing collateral.
- Produced high-end private events requiring detailed seating charts and custom food and beverage menu selection.

## EDUCATION

**Western Kentucky University** | Bowling Green, KY

BACHELOR of Arts, Criminology, Psychology

## **SKILLS**

**Event Strategy & VIP Hospitality:** VIP hospitality, Partnership management, Guest lists, Seating charts, Brand activations

**Event Logistics & Operations:** Event logistics, Travel accommodations, Vendor management, Event execution, Contract management

**Planning & Financial Management:** Budget management, Event planning, Budget templates, Data analysis, ROI analysis

**Professional & Digital Tools:** Microsoft Office Suite, Interpersonal communication, Marketing collateral, Relationship management, Time management